

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1069

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, ETRD, TATT, FR, IZ
SUBJECT: FRENCH PRIME MININSTER'S VISIT TO IRAQ

REF: (A) BAGHDAD 1040 (B) STATE 141774

1. BAGHDAD HASN'T SEEN SUCH A DESPLAY OF FRIENDSHIP
BETWEEN A WETERN NATION AND IRAQ IN SEVERAL YEARS.
BARRES'S TRIP WAS APPARENTLY RESTABLISHED THE
PERSONAL TIE BETWEEN FRENCH PRIME MINISTERS AND THE VICE-
CHAIRMAN OF THE RCC, SADDAM HUSSEIN. IRAQ'S LEADER WILL
VISIT FRANCE IN 1977, THE JOINT IRAQI-FRENCH COMMISSION WILL
MEET IN PARIS THIS AUTUMN, THE IRAQIS HAVE NOTED THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF REGULAR CONSULTAIONS AT A HIGH LEVEL,
AND THE GOI PUBLICLY LAUDS "PRIVILEGED COOPERATION" WITH
FRANCE. IRAQI PRESIDENT BAKR ALSO RECEIVED BARRE BUT
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THE SIGNIFICAT WORK OF THE VISIT WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN
TWO LENGTHY MEETINGS BETWEEN BARRE AND HUSSEIN.

2. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE PLACES SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE
PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE GOF'S
PREPAREDNESS TO HELP IRAQ IN ALL FIELDS. MORE REVEALING
IS BARRE'S STATEMENT TO THE PRESS THAT "FRANCE, WHICH

INSISTS ON ITS INDEPENDENCE, FULLY REALIZES THE DESIRE OF A COUNTRY LIKE IRAQ TO PROTECT ITS INDEPENDENCE BY EVERY MEANS AVAILABLE TO IT". THIS STATEMENT, IN CONNECTION WITH THE EMPHASIS ON THE TRAINING OF IRAQI CADRES AND TECHNICIANS AND THE PRESENCE OF IRAQI CHIEF OF STAFF SHANSHAL AT THE DEPARTURE CEREMONIES, PERHAPS SIGNALS AN AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE FRENCH MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO BALANCE IRAQI OIL EXPORTS TO FRANCE. FULSOME REFERENCES TO ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND GROWTH OF TRADE SUGGEST THAT IRAQ HAS LIFTED ITS PARTIAL HOLD ON NEW CONTRACTS FOR FRENCH FIRMS.

3. FRANCO-IRAQI DIFFERENCES ON THE MIDDLE EAST ARE NOT IGNORED, AS EACH PARTY "REITERATED ITS KNOWN STAND". BUT ANOTHER PART OF THE COMMUNIQUE COULD BE INTERPRETED TO INDICATE GREATER FLEXIBILITY ON THE GOI'S PART. THE AFFIRMATION OF "THE NEED TO TACKLE INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS THROUGH PEACEFUL MEANS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UN CHARTER AND INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TREATIES" MAY BE AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH OVERALL RAPPROCHEMENT IN FRANCO-IRAQI RELATIONS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, THE MECHANICS COULD STILL CAUSE PROBLEMS.
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